

Impact

BRING FAITH TO LIFE. FIND LIFE IN FAITH.



Impact this month

Use the metaphor of darkness and light as you prayerfully reflect each day:

What darkness has been thrust upon you, now or in the past?

What darkness is of your own making?

How will you come into the light of Christ through prayer, Mass, the sacrament of penance, fasting, and giving of yourself or your resources for others?

How will you follow Jesus' model of sacrifice and love?

See the light. Share the light.

At times, we choose to hide

None of us likes to admit it, but sometimes, we hide from the light of God's love. We may tell ourselves that we want to grow closer to God, yet our attitudes, actions, and inactions do not bear out this desire. We fail to live as we know we ought and take little or no time for prayer, Sunday Mass, or the sacrament of Reconciliation. We keep God at a distance, perhaps wondering if God's love truly is real or if we are really lovable. We choose to remain in the shadows and hide from the light of God's face.

See the light

As we continue through this season of Lent, we are invited to see in Christ the light of God's love and mercy. Lent is about making an intentional decision to follow Jesus more closely, to turn away from the darkness - that which is thrust upon us and that which is of our own making - and trust in God's incredible eternal light.

Jesus shows us the way

Throughout this month, especially during Holy Week, we come face-to-face with the full extent of God's love, the love in which we are created, and to which we are called. Jesus shows us that this light pierces every darkness. Not only did Jesus sacrifice himself, enduring suffering and death for us, he helps us understand that by seeking and living in the light, we will know God's love more powerfully than our human minds and hearts can fathom.

Share the light

In coming to see and know Christ's light more deeply, we are called to share the light as good stewards of God's varied grace. We do this by giving of ourselves and our resources as a reflection of the self-giving love of God, poured out and shared through Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. This is the purpose and meaning of our lives as Christian disciples. It is time to see and share the light of Christ's love.

Jesus is the supreme teacher of Christian stewardship, as he is of every other aspect of Christian life; and in Jesus' teaching and life self-emptying is fundamental...Refracted through the prisms of countless individual vocations, this way of life embodies and expresses the one mission of Christ: to do God's will, to proclaim the Good News of salvation, to heal the afflicted, to care for one's sisters and brothers, to give life - life to the full- as Jesus did. (SDR 19, 14)

"Amen, amen I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit." (Jn 12:20-33)



The foot of the cross

Walk with Jesus in a special way this Lent as he teaches and heals, forgives and loves. Place yourself alongside Jesus as he washes the feet of the disciples and prays that the cup of suffering might pass from him. Hear him say to the Father, "not my will but yours be done," and pause to wonder what great love would lead him to give so completely, to sacrifice his very self. See the look of love on his face as he entrusts Mary to the disciple he loved, and stay with him as he suffers and dies on the cross. And as you reflect and pray, peer into your heart and life and understand again, or perhaps for the first time, that Jesus died for each of us and for all.

Jesus wants us to come to him with our suffering, trials, confusion, doubts, and longing, to bring these things to the foot of the cross, where he looks at us with love and takes these difficult things to himself and transforms them. There is nothing so small or so great that it is beyond the love of God.

At the foot of the cross, we more fully understand that sacrifice is not as much about *giving up* as it is in *giving for*. On the cross, Jesus gave his life so that we might know God's redeeming love. At the foot of the cross, we take to heart the call to respond to this great love by loving in return, by "giving without counting the cost," just as Jesus did. Jesus did not hold back, and neither should we.

What do you bring to the foot of the cross? What are you called to sacrifice, and for whom? How might your giving transform your life and share God's love with others?

Giving ourselves away

"There the cross is found, because the cross is our desire to give ourselves away. It is our hunger to genuinely hand ourselves over, to give ourselves to others, because it is in doing so that we are most who we are. If you hold onto your life, you will not have life, but if you give it away, you cannot exhaust life. It becomes everlasting life. You become absolutely you.

And who, finally, are you? You are the image and likeness of God. If God is pure self-gift, then self-gift is the image in which we are made, the blueprint on which we are built. Therefore, to give ourselves away is what we most deeply desire." – Fr. Michael Himes, *Doing the Truth in Love*